

REMARKS

Of claims 1-38 currently pending in this application, claims 15-26 and 32-38 have been withdrawn from consideration, claims 1, 2, 11, 13 and 14 have been amended to better define the invention, and new claim 39 has been added. Reconsideration of the application in view of this response is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation that claims 27-31 have been allowed.

Claims 1 and 12-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Pfohl et al. (6,485,690).

Claim 1 has been amended to include the language that the microfluidic structure is adapted for contact with the well plates and comprises at least one microfluidic circuit, with each circuit having at least one port hole which is in fluid communication with at least one well of the well plate. It is submitted that this structure is not contained in the Pfohl et al. reference, and this is patentable over the reference. In addition, as claims 12-14 ultimately depend from claim 1, they should be allowable if claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 1-10, 13 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b) as being anticipated by Dubrow et al. (5,976,336).

Claim 1 has been amended to include the language that the microfluidic structure is adapted for contact with the well plate and comprises at least one microfluidic circuit having at least one port hole which is in fluid communication with at least one well of the well plate. It is submitted that this structure is not contained in the Dubrow et al. reference, and thus is patentable over that reference. In addition, as claims 2-10, 13 and 14 ultimately depend from claim 1, they should be allowable if claim 1 is allowable.

New claim 39 is claim 11 rewritten as an independent claim including the limitations of claim 1. As claim 11 is objected to, it is believed that claim 39 is allowable over the prior art.

Included with this Amendment is an Information Disclosure Statement along with several references. The examiner is respectfully requested to initial the form and return it with the next Office Action. The fee of \$180 should be charged to Deposit Account No. 12-1677.

As one independent claim has been added, a fee of \$42 for the independent claim in excess of 3 and \$9 for the additional claim in excess of 20 for a total of \$51 is due. Please charge this fee to Deposit Account No. 12-1677.

For the reasons given above, it is believed that all active claims contained in this application are in condition for allowance, and such favorable action is respectfully requested, and claims 15-26 and 32-35 should now be examined.

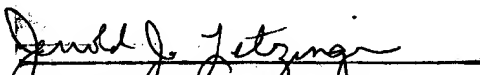
Respectfully submitted,



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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231, on April 21, 2003.

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